Swadeshi fuel or gasohol

1604. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to produce Swadeshi fuel or gasohol by mixing ethanol, a by product from sugar industry, with petrol;

(b) if so, to what extent it will reduce the dependence on imported crude oil; and

(c) whether gasohol will be cost effective and at what cost it will be made available to consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas *vide* Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 580(E) dated 20.9.2006 has directed that subject to commercial viability, oil marketing companies shall sell 5 per cent Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP), as per Bureau of Indian Standards specification, in the notified 20 States and 4 Union Territories w.e.f. 1.11.2006.

(b) At present, India imports about 76% of crude oil. The quantity of ethanol used for blending with petrol will substitute an equivalent quantity of petrol produced from crude oil. However, ethanol blending with petrol may not have a commensurate impact on the import of crude oil by the refineries, particularly in the short run, as it will depend on the product mix, feasibility of product exports and extent of capacity utilization by each refinery.

(c) The retail-selling price of 5% Ethanol Blended Petrol is the same as the retail-selling price of Petrol.

Attraction of tourists to India

1605. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is still not the preferred destination for tourists in South Asia as issues such as shortage of accommodation, delay in issue of visas, high tax rate and poor infrastructure have not been addressed;